

CHAPTER 109 CHILD CARE CENTERS

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PREAMBLE

The intent of this chapter is to specify minimum requirements for licensed child care centers and preschools and to define those child-caring environments that are governed by the licensing standards. The licensing standards govern licensing procedures, administration, parental participation, personnel, records, health and safety policies, physical facilities, activity programs, and food services.

441—109.1(237A) Definitions.

“Adult” means a person 18 years of age or older.

“Child” means either of the following:

1. A person 12 years of age or younger.
2. A person 13 years of age or older but younger than 19 years of age who has a developmental disability, as defined under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, Public Law No. 106-402, codified in 42 U.S.C. 15002(8).

“Child care” means the care, supervision, or guidance of a child by a person other than the parent, guardian, or custodian for periods of less than 24 hours per day per child on a regular basis in a place other than the child’s home, but does not include care, supervision, or guidance of a child by any of the following:

1. An instructional program administered by a public or nonpublic school system accredited by the department of education or the state board of regents or a program provided under Iowa Code sections 279.49 and 280.3A.
2. Any of the following church-related programs:
 - An instructional program.
 - A youth program other than a preschool, before or after school child care program, or other child care program.
 - A program providing care to children on church premises while the children’s parents are attending church-related or church-sponsored activities on the church premises.
3. Short-term classes of less than two weeks’ duration held between school terms or during a break within a school term.
4. A child care center for sick children operated as part of a pediatrics unit in a hospital licensed by the department of inspections and appeals pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 135B.
5. A program operated not more than one day per week by volunteers that meets all the following conditions:
 - Not more than 11 children are served per volunteer.
 - The program operates for less than 4 hours during any 24-hour period.
 - The program is provided at no cost to the children’s parent, guardian, or custodian.
6. A nationally accredited camp.
7. A program administered by a political subdivision of the state which is primarily for recreational or social purposes and is limited to children who are five years of age or older and attending school.

8. An instructional program for children at least four years of age who are attending prekindergarten, as defined by the state board of education, or a higher grade level, administered by a nonpublic school system which is not accredited by the department of education or the state board of regents.

9. An after-school program continuously offered throughout the school year to children who are at least five years of age and enrolled in school and attend the program intermittently, or a summer-only program for such children. The program must be provided through a nominal membership fee or at no cost.

10. A special activity program which meets less than four hours per day for the sole purpose of the special activity. Special activity programs include but are not limited to music or dance classes, organized athletic or sports programs, recreational classes, scouting programs, and hobby or craft clubs or classes.

11. A structured program for the purpose of providing therapeutic, rehabilitative, or supervisory services to children under any of the following:

- A purchase of service or managed care contract with the department.
- A contract approved by a local decategorization governance board.
- An arrangement approved by a juvenile court order.

12. Care provided on site to children of parents residing in an emergency, homeless, or domestic violence shelter.

13. A child care facility providing respite care to a licensed foster family home for a period of 24 hours or more to a child who is placed with that licensed foster family home.

14. A program offered to a child whose parent, guardian, or custodian is engaged solely in a recreational or social activity, remains immediately available and accessible on the physical premises on which the child's care is provided, and does not engage in employment while the care is provided.

"Child care center" or *"center"* means a facility providing child day care for seven or more children, except when the facility is registered as a child development home. For the purposes of this chapter, the word *"center"* shall apply to a child care center or preschool, unless otherwise specified.

"Child care facility" or *"facility"* means a child care center, a preschool, or a registered child development home.

"Department" means the department of human services.

"Extended evening care" means child care provided by a child care center between the hours of 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

"Facility" means a building or physical plant established for the purpose of providing child day care.

"Get-well center" means a facility that cares for a child with an acute illness of short duration for short enrollment periods.

"Involvement with child care" means licensed or registered as a child care facility, employed in a child care facility, residing in a child care facility, receiving public funding for providing child care, providing child care as a child care home provider, or residing in a child care home.

"National Health and Safety Performance Standards" means the National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs produced by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics with the support of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Department of Health and Human Services.

"Parent" means parent or legal guardian.

“Person subject to an evaluation” means a person who has committed a transgression and who is described by any of the following:

1. The person is being considered for licensure or is licensed.
2. The person is being considered by a child care facility for employment involving direct responsibility for a child or with access to a child when the child is alone, or the person is employed with such responsibilities.

3. The person will reside or resides in a child care facility.

4. The person has applied for or receives public funding for providing child care.

“Preschool” means a child day care facility which provides care to children aged three through five, for periods of time not exceeding three hours per day. The preschool’s program is designed to help the children develop intellectual, social and motor skills, and to extend their interest in and understanding of the world about them.

“Transgression” means the existence of any of the following in a person’s record:

1. Conviction of a crime.
2. A record of having committed founded child or dependent adult abuse.
3. Listing in the sex offender registry established under Iowa Code chapter 692A.
4. A record of having committed a public or civil offense.
5. Department revocation or denial of a child care facility registration or license due to the person’s continued or repeated failure to operate the child care facility in compliance with licensing and registration laws and rules.

“Unrestricted access” means that a person has contact with a child alone; has access in providing care, education, guidance, or discipline to a child; or has access to the facility beyond the passage area and room in which the person’s child is in care.

441—109.2(237A) Licensure procedures.

109.2(1) Application for license.

a. Any adult or agency has the right to apply for a license. The application for a license shall be made to the department on Form 470-0722, Application for a License to Operate a Child Care Center, provided by the department.

b. Requested reports including the fire marshal’s report and other information relevant to the licensing determination shall be furnished to the department upon application and renewal. A building owned or leased by a school district or accredited nonpublic school that complies with rules adopted by the state fire marshal for school buildings under 661—Chapter 5 is considered appropriate for use by a child care facility.

c. When a center makes a sufficient application for an initial or renewal license, it may operate for a period of up to 120 days, pending a final licensing decision. A center has made a sufficient application when it has submitted the following to the department:

- (1) An application for a license.
- (2) An approved fire marshal’s report.
- (3) A floor plan indicating room descriptions and dimensions, including location of windows and doors.
- (4) Information sufficient to determine that the center director meets minimum personnel qualifications.

d. Applicants shall be notified of approval or denial within 120 days from the date the application is submitted.

e. The department shall not act on a licensing application for 12 months after an applicant's child care center license has been denied or revoked.

f. When the department has denied or revoked a license, the applicant or person shall be prohibited from involvement with child care unless the department specifically permits involvement through a record check decision.

109.2(2) License.

a. An applicant showing full compliance with center licensing laws and these rules, including department approval of center plans and procedures, shall be issued a license for 24 months. In determining whether or not a center is in compliance with the intent of a licensing standard outlined in this chapter, the department shall make the final decision.

b. A new license shall be applied for when the center moves, expands, or the facility is remodeled to change licensed capacity.

c. A new license shall be applied for when another adult or agency assumes ownership or legal responsibility for the center.

109.2(3) Provisional license.

a. A provisional license may be issued or a previously issued license may be reduced to a provisional license for a period up to one year when the center does not meet all standards imposed by law and these rules.

b. A provisional license shall be renewable when written plans giving specific dates for completion to bring the center up to standards are submitted to and approved by the department. A provisional license shall not be reissued for more than two consecutive years when the lack of compliance with the same standards has not been corrected within two years.

c. When the center submits documentation or it can otherwise be verified that the center fully complies with all standards imposed by law or these rules, the license shall be upgraded to a full license.

109.2(4) Denial. Initial applications or renewals shall be denied when:

a. The center does not comply with center licensing laws and these rules in order to qualify for a full or provisional license.

b. The center is operating in a manner which the department determines impairs the safety, health, or well-being of children in care.

c. A person subject to an evaluation has transgressions that merit prohibition of involvement with child care and of licensure, as determined by the department.

d. Information provided either orally or in writing to the department or contained in the center's files is shown to have been falsified by the provider or with the provider's knowledge.

e. The center is not able to obtain an approved fire marshal's certificate as prescribed by the state fire marshal in 661—Chapter 5 or Iowa Code chapter 100 or fails to comply in correcting or repairing any deficiencies in the time determined by the fire marshal or the fire marshal determines the facility is not safe for occupancy.

109.2(5) Revocation and suspension. A license shall be revoked or suspended if corrective action has not been taken when:

a. The center does not comply with center licensing laws or these rules.

b. The center is operating in a manner which the department determines impairs the safety, health, or well-being of the children in care.

c. A person subject to an evaluation has transgressions that merit prohibition of involvement with child care and of licensure, as determined by the department.

d. Information provided to the department or contained in the center's files is shown to have been falsified by the provider or with the provider's knowledge.

e. The facility is not able to obtain an approved fire marshal's certificate as prescribed by the state fire marshal in 661—Chapter 5 or Iowa Code chapter 100 or fails to comply in correcting or repairing any deficiencies in the time determined by the fire marshal or the fire marshal determines the facility is not safe for occupancy.

109.2(6) Adverse actions.

a. Notice of adverse actions for a denial, revocation, or suspension and the right to appeal the licensing decision shall be given to applicants and licensees in accordance with 441—Chapter 7.

b. An applicant or licensee affected by an adverse action may request a hearing by means of a written request directed to the county office or central office of the department. The request shall be submitted within 30 days after the date the department mailed the official notice containing the nature of the denial, revocation, or suspension.

c. A letter received by an owner or director of a licensed center initiating action to deny, suspend, or revoke the facility's license shall be conspicuously posted at the main entrance to the facility where it can be read by parents or any member of the public. The letter shall remain posted until resolution of the action to deny, suspend or revoke the license. If the action to deny, suspend, or revoke is upheld, the center shall return the license to the department.

d. If the center's license is denied, suspended or revoked, the department shall notify the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of each child for whom the facility provides child care. The center shall cooperate with the department in providing the names and address of the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of each child for whom the facility provides child care.

441—109.3(237A) Inspection and evaluation. The department shall conduct an on-site visit in order to make a licensing recommendation for all initial and renewal applications for licensure and shall determine compliance with licensing standards imposed by licensing laws and these rules when a complaint is received.

109.3(1) At least one unannounced on-site visit shall be conducted each calendar year.

109.3(2) After each visit and complaint, the department shall document whether a center was in compliance with center licensing standards imposed by licensing laws and these rules.

109.3(3) The written documentation of the department's conclusion as to whether a center was in compliance with licensing standards for all licensing visits and complaints shall be available to the public. However, the identity of the complainant shall be withheld unless expressly waived by the complainant.

441—109.4(237A) Administration.

109.4(1) Purpose and objectives. Incorporated and unincorporated centers shall submit a written statement of purpose and objectives. The plan and practices of operation shall be consistent with this statement.